

to the miner, health insurance is more significant in the long term than the wages of the pension. But they wanted the health insurance in their old age, to earn coverage for their wives, too often widowed too early. They sacrificed for the guarantee of coverage, a guarantee that was sealed by this Government in law and which was promised to them by President Harry S. Truman, the U.S. Government, and which we, in a bipartisan way, passed into law in something called the Coal Act back in 1952, which is in the process of being repealed by the Republican majority.

These benefits, Mr. President, were guaranteed by a promise made by that President 50 years ago. So what is a contract worth? They ask; I ask. These coal miners escaped floods, they escaped roof falls, they escaped explosions, they escaped the ravages of black lung. They still survive, a few of them, across this country, 92,000. But they may not survive this Republican Congress, and I am sad to say there is probably more to come.

But for me, I have seen enough. I have seen enough. Every person has a line, a line in the sand. Every one of my colleagues has a line. For me, the line is these old miners. I cannot, I will not, go back to West Virginia without knowing that I did everything—everything—to stop this cruelty.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. I ask unanimous consent for 1 more minute.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, no amount of procedural pain or legislative suffering that I, as a Senator, rightfully can impose—and will—could possibly offset the pain and the suffering being imposed on so many fragile people by the measures being rammed through the Senate Finance Committee and this Congress.

I recognize that the powerful interests who will benefit from these harsh measures will probably win and these coal miners will probably be cut off. But I want to make it hard, and I have the right to make it hard, and I have the moral obligation to make it hard for anybody to do that. I only wish I could make it as hard for them as they intend to make it—we in the Congress, that is—for the children and the seniors and the students and the disabled and the poor working families and those old coal miners. That is my line in the sand. I fully object to what this Congress is doing.

I thank the Chair. I thank the Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I yield 5 minutes to the Senator from Illinois, Senator SIMON.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the Senator from Illinois.

BALANCING THE BUDGET

Mr. SIMON. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from North Dakota for yielding to me.

Senator BOXER, whose work I have come to appreciate more and more in this body, and I had a press conference in which we had some senior citizens and some students, senior citizens talking about the need for student aid, students talking about how we have to protect our grandparents. The reality is this should not be a partisan fight.

I am sure the Presiding Officer has heard me mention before we have become excessively partisan. It is one of the changes that has happened in my years in Congress, and it is not a good change. I think, frankly, the Republican Party is going to get hurt somewhat in the course of all this. But there is too much partisanship in all of this. I do not believe it makes sense when we have huge deficits—and the Washington Post had an editorial about this this morning—to be saying we are going to have a tax cut.

It is like saying you are having a New Year's resolution of going on a diet, and you are going to start it off by having a great big dessert. That is what we are doing now. We are going to balance the budget, but we are going to have a \$245 billion tax cut.

If we want to use that \$245 billion for reducing the deficit, I would understand that. But that is not what is happening, and I do not think there is any question about what we are going to impose on seniors. Also—and it has not received as much attention as Medicare has—Medicaid is also going to really be hurt. Who receives Medicaid? The majority of those who receive it are children, poor children—24 percent of our young people live in poverty—and senior citizens, those who are in nursing homes. They are basically the primary recipients.

But it is part of a pattern of not being as responsive as we should be. Let me just tie in with what those grandparents said out in front of the Capitol just a few minutes ago at the press conference on student aid.

The Presiding Officer will forgive me to say he is old enough, along with me, to remember the GI bill. It is interesting how the GI bill emerged. The GI bill, which we look back to with great pride and say what a great thing it was for our country, was a matter of controversy. There were those who said we ought to give a cash bonus to veterans, and the American Legion, to their great credit, said we ought to have the GI bill which will provide education to veterans. That was the fight.

Today we have almost a similar fight. Cash bonus—we do not call it a cash bonus, we call it a tax cut. Like the cash bonus, it will be frittered away and will not do much for our country. But if we put money into student aid, we are going to do something for our country.

Direct lending is under attack, and this is not a Democratic program. TOM

PETRI, a Republican from Wisconsin, was the first one to suggest it. My colleague, Senator Dave Durenberger, was a cosponsor with me of direct lending when it was introduced. Senator David Durenberger has properly said, in regard to the role of banks and the guarantee agencies, "This is not free enterprise, it is a free lunch." That is why the banks and the guarantee agencies are fighting for this.

The commission that looked into how we ought to have student aid, headed by our former Republican colleague Senator Paula Hawkins, recommended direct lending. Larry Lindsey, a Bush appointee to the Federal Reserve Board, has said we should have direct lending, it makes more sense, in a letter to our colleague, Senator SPENCER ABRAHAM.

We have to be looking out for the interest of the young and the old, for everyone in our society. We have to reach out. And I hope we use some common sense. We are going to be in this battle the middle of next week. And to say we are going to have tax cuts for people at the same time we deprive elderly and students of the help that they need, I do not think is in the national interest.

I simply ask the Presiding Officer—and I know he cannot answer this from the chair—I have not yet had one person with an income over \$100,000 come up to me and say, "I ought to have a tax cut." I have had a lot of people come to me and say, "We should not be cutting back on Medicare, we should not be cutting back on Medicaid, we should not be cutting back to assistance to students." Those are the choices that we have, and I hope we do the responsible thing here.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I yield 5 minutes to the Senator from Washington, Senator MURRAY.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the Senator from the State of Washington.

CUTS IN MEDICARE AND MEDICAID

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to join my colleagues in exposing to the light of day the real lasting affects of the deep, reckless cuts in Medicare and Medicaid that are being rushed through this Congress. I want to focus specifically on the massive proposed scaling back of Medicaid and how it completely ignores the values of average, middle-income families today.

Let me focus for a minute on one of the hidden surprises in the Medicaid block grant proposal—one that is going to devastate the so-called sandwich generation—my generation. The sandwich generation is those of us who are raising our kids at home, and who are also responsible for the health and safety of our aging parents.

Today, under current Medicaid laws that have been in effect since 1965, adult children are not held legally or financially liable for their parents'